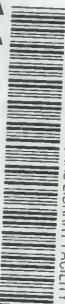


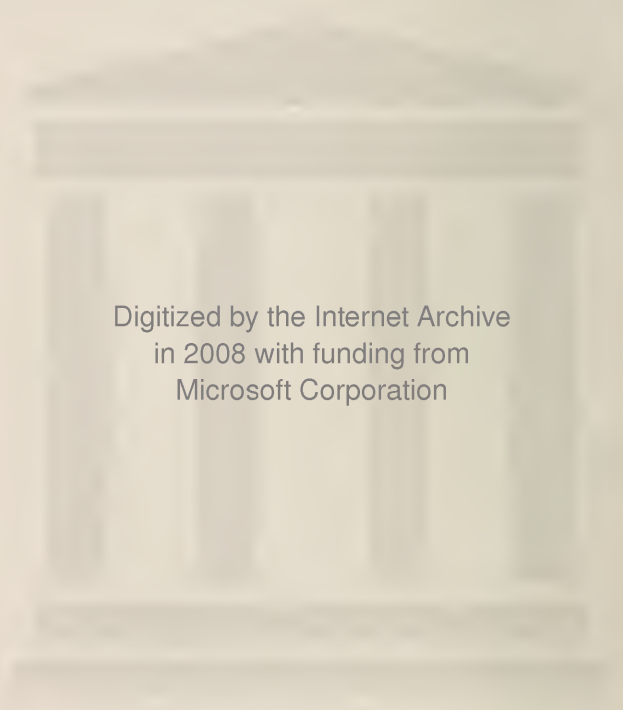
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Verses by

RONALD McCASKILL

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A SONG OF THE WEST

The Call of the Wild

In your narrow limitations,
Mid endless toil and strife,
What do you, dwellers in cities
Know of a life that's Life?
Away in the great North West
Where man hath scarcely trod,
The snow clad height
And river's might
Seem to echo the Glory of God!

When you light your little bonfire
To burn what you call weeds,
Were the only things you thought of
Those present paltry needs?
To me it's but a message,
The scent of its smoke a link,
With that great wild west
Where the eagles nest,
And your sun just touches its brink.

'Tho you live in wondrous mansion
Or cottage it's the same,
You're yoked to steel conventions
And freedom's but a name!
I dream of a glowing camp fire
Of a little moon-kissed tent,
Where the giant trees
Mock the gentle breeze,
And I'm filled with a great content.

Have you heard a roaring torrent
That knows no captor's will?
Have you ever felt a silence
That seemed to strike a chill?
To me its ever calling
Like a mother to her child
And there is no choice
When I hear that voice
For I know it's the call of the wild!

LOOKING BACKWARD

(Rueful Reflections by Reincarnated Rufus)

There's many that say we're way ahead now
Of the folks in the days gone by,
But take it from me:—and I've lived lots of times—
They either don't know or they lie.
Now in my first life I'd a nice little cave,
You'd style it as "freehold" to-day,
'Cos I went with a club while the occupant slept:
—He was smaller than me anyway:

No taxes had we and no notes overdue,
No trusts or "John D.s" * at that time,
We'd lots of hard cash for we made it ourselves,
Three twenty-pound flints to the dime.†
Yet looking back now to that far away day,
It seems most remarkably funny,
We let the chance slip without boiling in oil
That beast: the inventor of money.

Then I sought a sweet maid, 'twas love at first sight,
How simple our wedding affair:
No asking papa, no pressmen and swank:
I just dragged her home by the hair.
With longing I sigh for the styles of that day
Though our set had to be a la mode,
For when wifie said "John, I need a fall suit,"
I'd only to mix up the woad.

Who wouldn't give up the modernest frills
To get back to Columbus's day,
When I honoured my tailor by wearing his clothes,
And he'd wait (and does still) for his pay.
Then think of the pleasure a husband would get,
Could he send to the stake or the wrack,
The wretch who decrees that his wife must be clothed
In dresses that hook up the back.

* John D: Rockefeller

† Ten Cents

THE TEMPTRESS

There's a little automatic in a store just round the corner,
And she draws me to the window winking wicked eyes at me:

She whispers, "Cut the worry,

You can do it in a hurry:

I may be just a thirty-two, but I can set you free."

She really is a lady; so straight and highly polished;
She's got a way of putting things that takes a fellow's breath,

I'm bound to say I like her,

Though she tells me I'm a piker,

When I turn her introductions down to death!

But my scheming automatic, tho' I like your damned
persistence,

You can argue till the crack of doom, I never will agree.

So, if you must make a killing

Find someone else that's willing;

You're pretty, but, you're far too cold to vamp a chap like me.

So tho' I'm starved and wretched, my alluring automatic,
You've something else to reckon on:—you've got to fight a girl!

And she's calling, calling, calling

So you'll never catch me falling,

My life's the bit of flotsam she's dragged from out the whirl.

*On December 27th, Southern California had a snowstorm and
on January 18th and 19th, a flood.*

OH! FAITHLESS ONE

O Sunny South O Golden West!
How could you go and do it,
I'd always pinned my faith on you,
And now you've made me rue it;
If you had been some other place
I would have been quite ready,
But you: you're fickle-minded too,
And I had thought you steady:
I thought your weather men spoke truth
About your gentle winter heat,
And now I quite expect to see
An iceberg block each business street.

I've knocked around this globe of ours
From desert sands to heather,
And proved that David's "liar" speech
Meant men who tell the weather:
It doesn't matter where I go,
It's always just the same,
This climate brag is just like drink—
A vice that none can tame.
I've been to places reckoned wet,
And had a raincoat made,
And taken rubber shoes to find,
It's ninety in the shade:
And vice versa, I've been told
Some place is nice and dry
To find it's true it never rains:
They just let loose the sky.
Now I've a hunch that when I'm dead
I'll prove it once again
I'll find that Heaven's nice warm sun
Has turned to gentle rain:
I'll even have some pity left

For those I used to know,
They'll find their nice warm sulphur-baths
Have turned to chilly snow,
While the steaming brimstone porridge
They used to think so nice,
Will be served up on toasting forks
In chunks of solid ice.

So California, while you've sinned,
Maybe you've done your best,
And while you are no better, you're
No worse than all the rest.

LITTLE RED ROSE

Song

Gladly I'd change with you, Little Red Rose,
You were so happy for one brief day,
Her soul sought yours thro' her wonderful eyes,
As gently pressed to her heart you lay.

Gladly I'd change with you, Little Red Rose,
Casting the burden of life aside,
Yours is the joy of a perfect peace—
She gave you her love before you died.

THE FAILURE

Far on the road to the vale of despair,
Through the mire of mistake and regret,
My feet leave the prints of sorrow and care :
Sorrow for Her I have dragged with me there,
To sink 'neath a burden of debt.

Wearied with trouble, for me there's no rest,
Still must I strive in life's race,
What does it profit I gave of my best,
In a world where gold is the creed confessed,
And poverty's held a disgrace.

Broken in health, at the wane of my day
I must enter once more in the strife,
And want, like a beast that is greedy for prey,
Must be fought to the end, that shield I may
Her I hold dearer than life.

Is there none that will help in my desperate strait,
'Ere the sparks of my hope lie dead?
With the work that I crave lest it be too late,
And I'm forced to eat by relentless fate
Of charity's bitter bread.

THE CALL OF THE SEA

Who harks with me to the call of the sea,
When the wavelets dance on a summer's day,
Who laughs along and catches the song
When the day's too short and the night's too long,
And watches the ripples play?

Who harks with me to the call of the sea,
Where the whitecaps leap in a cloud of spray;
Who loves the thought of a sheet that's taut,
When you've everything set and you're out for sport—
Tho' your sticks may carry away?

Who glories with me in a raging sea,
In the roar of the storm and the shriek of the gale;
In the shattering crash of the seas that smash,
In the driving sleet that cuts like a lash,
And you cling for life to the rail?

For these are the things that appeal to me
And friends of mine must be friends to the sea!

A FISHMONGER'S AD.

There is a kind of herring found in the Pacific that has a strong taste of iodoform; the theory is that these fish live on a seaweed from which iodine is extracted.

The above fact suggested the following "ad" to be used by a fishmonger.

When you're sick of your food and want a new dish,
And your brain's in a comatose state,
The fishman can easily suit every wish,
He's a kind of a "Burbanky" * expert in fish
And makes a new sort while you wait.
'Tis his novel idea to make fish for each trade,
As you'll see when I quote from his "ad.",
But you'll want to know quick when he gets you mixed up,
If the fish or your taste has gone bad.

Here is the "Ad."—

We've chloroformed carp for the medical man
And carbolised cod for the nurse,
Iodoformed herring's an excellent plan
For those of a slenderer purse.
A swordfish is served for a soldierly meal
Or lyddited shellfish for tea,
But the Jellicoed shark was all sent to Kiel
Keeping periscoped prawns from the sea.

Our scented star fish would make actresses rave,
Foundry men like a nice smelly smelt,
We've sulphurous soles for the parson to save,
Lemon ones for our own orange belt.†
And last but not least, we've beautiful bass,
Abstainers can note without fear,
At home it's in use as a gargle for throats,
But has fins and a tail when it's here.

* "Burbank" is the great plant wizard.

† The "Orange Belt" referred to is the name given to the orange producing section of California.

THE HOUSE OF THE SOUL

Two mansions stand in seeming pride within a garden fair,
Crowning a sea-girt cliff that towers in rugged majesty;
Each beautiful,—unlike yet like,—a sunlit picture rare,
A master craftman's theme in perfect harmony.

And yet within!

The one:—Chairs and divans, soft-cushioned, called in rivalry;

Warm pictured walls; spoils from the furthest corners of the earth.

Quaint things that visioned "Ladies Faire" and olde chivalry,

A wealth of books: A log fire blazing on the hearth.

The other:—Cold in severity, striking with icy chill

For all its formal elegance and stateliness of mien;

What use are gilded stools, brocaded walls, they cannot fill

The empty spaces where a welcome might have been.

Silent, I fell to thinking

Of those that I had met in this and other lands,

Whom I had heard to laugh and then to weep:

Seeming well met yet chained by golden marriage bands

Swearing to vows they knew no power to keep!

Fools in their folly; grasping the surface thought,

Mouthing the vapid nothings of insanity

And caring naught

While paltry whims, light as the thistledown are caught

To satiate their vanity!

Poor fools that take a word, a laugh, a kiss,

And think they know the giver through an idle speech:

Are pearls found floating on a tropic sea

For greedy hands to reach?

And yet they dare to call this love,

This cheap impostor masquerading in a sacred role;

Think of the sea, the mansions set above

With outer structures so all-perfect in their unity,

And yet within; apart, as pole from pole:

Let mate seek mate, but not by outward sign,

Go, search within the house, there lies the soul divine.

THE GATHERING O' THE CLAN

*Dedicated to Archibald MacArthur, who passed on;
September 10th, 1920.*

He rests: the rest that comes to weary man,
His burdens cast aside, his task well done;
Parting the veil, that hides the great beyond,
From life, thro' death to life: a soul passed on!

He sleeps: the sleep that knows no waking call,
Far from the land that bore him as her own;
Gone to that greater gathering of his clan,
Led by the Cross as in the days long gone.

He sleeps: his couch, old mother earth's great heart;
Nor heeds the blazing sun, nor sky that lowers;
Wrapt in a plaid from God's own wond'rous loom,
A tartan wove of nature's trees and flowers.

*The fiery cross carried thro' the highlands in old days was the
means used to gather the clans!*

THE GREAT ISSUE

Dedicated to the "Little Navy" party, U.S.A.

O Honorable Mist'ers,—or do you like Esquire,—

Accept my salutations:

Ye self-appointed experts that aspire

To run our nation.

For are not naval boards and army councils too,

Just simple boobs compared with such as you;

Beneath consideration.

To think of spending millions on adequate defence

Is absolutely funny,

We've always got along with bluff and press pretence

And saved the money:

We can't afford to catch the germ of Europe's war disease,

When treasuries are merely hives, and politicians bees

That steal the money.

It's most impertinent of admirals to say we're not

Prepared for war,

They're paid to use the tools we've bought and got,

Not ask for more:

Daniels has put them in their place, and now they plainly see

He'll be obeyed and they must change their "Fiske-al"

policy,—

Or there's the door.

Their silly "unpreparedness" and "hundred million" talk

Sure is the limit,

Must we remind them of our barrel: meant for pork

With nothing in it?

So when they made an estimate that trades upon our fears,

Said Dan "I'm IT on naval things," give me the office shears—

I'll trim it.

We never have been licked, and all this shriek of war's

A bogey scare ;

When hostile battle-ships are making for our shores

We'll soon prepare :

And if our ships are out at sea and get back somewhat late,

The foe, if they are gentlemen, would surely wait

And fight us fair.

*

*

*

And so ye " Little Navy " men resume your heavy sleep
Forgetting slaughter comes to lambs and oftener to sheep ;
Until that day, sleep on.

THE VISION OF THE LOST

(*A Dog Story*)

You ask why I'm so serious of late,
Morose and silent? I admit it's true,—
Yes, there's a reason, pressing like a weight,
A thing I could not speak of—save to you;
I had a frightful dream last New Year's night,
And I, till now, I've kept it to myself;
I tried to put it down to nightmare fright,
Digestion wrong, a little out of health;
I cannot drive its horror from my mind;
The haunting thoughts come back, and back again.
I grope for Truth. Oh! why am I too blind
To pierce the cloud we call sub-conscious brain?

You know old Jack, the dog I'd had for years.
He'd stuck to me when even friends would fail.
Lord; how I loved him. (Damn these silly tears.)
I loved his every hair, his wagging tail.
When I felt blue he'd squeeze up in my chair
And stick his dear old head against my cheek.
He knew the way to banish all my care.
And through his eyes the soul of him would speak;
I'd no one else to care, I needed none,
My thoughts were words that he could understand.
So, in our way, we'd talk for hours, alone.
To seal our bond old Jack would lick my hand.
But, when THAT night I took him to his bed
He whined, blind fool I was, I made him go
Paying no heed, but turned away instead,
Leaving him whining—crouched as for a blow.

I dreamed that I had waked in some strange room
Filled with the tools that tell a surgeon's trade,
Nor could I still a sense of pending doom.
In terror gripped, I tried to cry for aid.
God! how I tried, my tongue was parched, no sound
Would pass my lips,—I strove to move in vain,
My limbs seemed paralysed or bound
By some dread force and by an unseen chain.
Then through the gloom that hid the open door
Came white-garbed men and something dragging back,

Shrinking with terror, cowering to the floor,
It was—God help me—Jack!
Frantic with fear I felt my senses reel,
I prayed and cursed in maddened rage and hate,
As in his eyes I read his dumb appeal,
“ Master, O Master; help me in my strait.”

With vile device his slightest move was stayed,
I hid my eyes, yet through the lids could see
His wincing flesh beneath the knife that flayed
And wrung from him the moans of agony.
I fought, as one possessed, against that spell.
Fired with a fury and aflame with love
Standing within the very gates of hell,
A thing of stone, all impotent to move,
I prayed to God that He would end this crime
And give the peace that death alone could bring.
I heard those friends, as in mediaeval time
Jest at the anguish of a living thing.

*

*

*

And then I woke
With all the horror of that hideous scene
Carved as in sculpture deep into my brain,
I shook like one who near to death has been,
Wrought with the tension of tremendous strain,
The sweat broke out in beads upon my face.
My throbbing veins were knots of living wire,
What did it mean? Where was that awful place?
The fevered thoughts coursed through my brain like fire,
Then with a rush I felt my mind come back,
I ran for Jack—I could at least atone,
And as I ran, I shouted, “ Jack, my Jack ”—
But,—Jack had gone!

"THE HOMELAND'S CALL" 1914

Hearken, ye whelps of the Lion!

Stir ye, awake from your dream;

Hark to the world-flung challenge,

List to the eagle's scream.

Thrown in the teeth of the nations,

Terrible, menacing, grim:

Hear ye the words of defiance,

Hurled to the Empire's rim?

"Stand from the path of my southern mate,

Stand aside lest ye be too late,

And I tear thee limb from limb."

Hearken, ye whelps of the Lion,

Hear ye his arrogant cry?

"Where is there one to dare me,

One who'll do battle and die?

Fear I the bear that was conquered,

Cowed by the small yellow man?

Heed I the squeals of an upstart

I ground in the dust of Sedan?

Who talks to me of the Lion's sway?

A lion's cubs may be eagle's prey,

And mercy is none of my plan."

Hearken, ye whelps of the Lion,

What says thy mother's roar?

"Who is this Teuton boaster

To prate so loud of war?

Long have I stood his insults,

Long have I leashed my might,

But never brooked dishonoured peace;

The time has come to fight:

Rise then, ye whelps of the Lion's breed,

Thy mother's call is the Empire's need,

And battle for the right:"

“ Send me the men from the Southern Cross,
Eager to do their part;
Send me my sons from the frozen north,
Men of the mighty heart.
Give me the men from the sun-baked veldt,
Bred to the rifle's crack;
Send me alike both rich and poor;
No fear that men I'll lack:
Making one cause with my sons at home,
Warring on land or on salt sea foam,
To fight for the Union Jack.”

RAUCOUS RAVINGS

In Blankety Blank Verse, 1915

When I was dead
Some years ahead
A.D. Nineteen nineteen;
I skipped like a lamb in that beautiful land
The land of Betwixt and Between!
Well, as I was saying, I skipped away
Till my breath, or ether I should say,
Was taken away!

I saw the awfulest, horriblest crowd
That shrieked aloud!
That swelled and swelled
And howled and yelled!
That cursed and swore
And bit and tore,
That fought as only the demons can
For the blood of a man!

And I saw the man and great was he,
He laughed Ha-ha! and he laughed He-he!
With infinite glee
Their rage to see.
Then I fought too till I reached his side,
And then I cried
To ask his name
And how he came
To fear no thing alive or dead?
Whereat he said:
"I'm the only man from the U.S.A.
Guarded by Virtue night and day
For can I not with honour say;
(He swelled with pride)
I never wrote or even tried
To write a PHOTO PLAY."

“TWO BIRDS ”

I sat one day in a rose clad bower

When the blossom was gay on the old apple tree,
While the wee birds trilled just as free as the air

And a jenny wren came and talked to me!

I wish I could tell you the things that she said,
Those wonderful secrets I cannot repeat!

But each time I spoke her dear little head

Went all on one side and her answer was “sweet.”

Then I journeyed down to the city's heart

Where toil holds thrall and none are free,
And another bird in a cage was there,

And she came when I called and talked to me!

I wish I could tell you the things that she said,
Those wonderful secrets I cannot repeat!

She whispered so low as she bent down her head

And Oh, I can tell you the answer was sweet.

WHO KNOWS?

My brother Jack and I see things in different ways
And my reward is failure: His, success.
Still; though he may be right and I all wrong,
Somehow I think, I like his way the less.
I find no joy in mundane money'd schemes,
Give me my fairyland—my world of dreams!

When we were scarce grown up we'd roam the purple downs,
And come perchance upon some mighty tree;
He'd fall to visioning its trunk beneath the saw,
The while it whispered of the long ago to me.
Of how beneath its shady cloak of green
The powder'd gallant woo'd and won his queen.

Around the ancient walls of some long ruined tower
I weave romance: while Jack would pass it by,
Nor see the ghostly forms of jerkin'd men-at-arms
Nor hear the weapons clash—the savage battle cry.
To him 'tis but a wasting pile of stone
Set on a place where building might be done.

The moaning winds like souls in agony who cry,
A babbling brook, so like a restless child;
The raging ocean, smashing the works of man
With giant waves; lashed by a fury wild,
All hold me spellbound, while his brooding mind
Curses the power he knows no means to bind.

So till our time is done it will be ever thus;
Which is the right, and which the wrong,
What man shall judge of us?

TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY

Peeping beneath rebellious raven curls

Her dark eyes twinkle like the stars at eve,

Mirth in their tempting; saying, " P'raps you may

Steal one: if you are bold enough to thief! "

" But mind," she whispers, " office walls have eyes

And I must stick at work and dare not play,

But if, mayhap, we meet with no one near

You might steal more: before I ran away! "

Then thro' the distant past my mind whirled back

To far off lands, and where beside the sea

I caught the flash of shell pink limbs, and eyes

That peeped around a rock and mocked at me:

And then we played the game of hide and seek,

The sunbeams stealing kisses as she ran

Until I caught her; breathless, laughing, coy,

And so my turn to play the thief began!

“BALU” (The Major’s dog)

And some others

Most of us knows the fox-'ound,
'E's white, sploshed black an' tan
An' 'is nose can smell a smell wot isn't there:
Or p'raps you've seen my lurcher
When beside my 'eels 'e ran,
Else 'elping me by bringin' 'ome an 'are.

Then there's the lidy's poodle
(Rummy sort o' cuss)
'Is waggin' end they clips until it's bare;
Rides in 'er bloomin' kerridge,
An' there isn't arf a fuss
If Jeames fergits the ribbon for 'is 'air.

Wot price the English Bull-dog,
All appetite an' teeth?
A-lickin' of 'is chops at sight o' “ crook,”
'Ang around 'is master's 'ouse
A-lookin' like a thief!
Your pants (and you) will wear a worried look.

'Then there's the ugly “ bob-tail ”
A-guardin' sheep on farms,
An' terriers; a dozen different sorts:
'Sides yappin' snappin' lap-dogs
Wot gals carries in their arms,
With bulgin' eyes a-stickin' out like warts.

We've got an “ Aber-span-dachs ”
(Newest kind o' dog):
Unknown at either “ Kennel Club ” or “ Crufts,”
'Is 'ead is most all spaniel,
'Is legs is just plain frog:
'Is 'air's put on in little kind o' tufts:

'Is chest's a little bit o' " Dane "
Two yards away's wot wags :
'E's like them German-sausage 'ounds you've seen :
I says 'e ort to 'ave six legs
'Cos " little Mary " sags.
With four 'e sweeps the carpet : in between !

The 'ousemaid's mop 'e carries aft
'E fancies is a tail,
'Is ears they flops like punkahs in the Mess,
'Is colour's black with yeller feet,
But that's a mere detail
That en'ances 'is appearance : more or less.

'E's a terror for the lidies,
Wot ! " 'As 'e any kids ? "
There's thirty odd as knows 'im as papa.
" You'd like to buy our Balu "
Rockfeller ain't the dibs.
You go off 'ome an' buy a pariah.

(By the Major's soldier servant)

THE LIGHT ON THE ALTAR

Night called to me!

The old cathedral towering vast and grey
Held wide its doors and bid me enter there:
“ Find peace, my son; thy troubles cast away,
Forget thy care
And rest.”

I was afraid!

Lest these be visions of a troubled mind
That came to mock me in my wretchedness;
I knew no peace, nor could I even find
Forgetfulness
In sleep.

Within was dark!

I strove to penetrate the heavy gloom,
As one in blindness wild and fearful, gropes;
The blackness hung a pall upon the tomb
Of shattered hopes
Long dead.

I understood!

Above the altar glowed a single light,
Intense and brilliant, calling from afar;
“ I give thee strength, take courage for thy fight,
I am thy star
Of hope.”

UNEMPLOYED

Dear Sir, This to ask for a job,
For the third and I trust, lucky time;
Seeing prose didn't catch your "good eye"
I've decided to put this in rhyme:
What I need is the start: I can rise!
So say what you've got you can offer:
Idleness won't fill the pot,
Nor waiting replenish the coffer!
You've room for "live men,"
So just tell me when
You can do with the service I proffer!

As a salesman you'd find me O.K.,
Put me down where you will in the store:
But if it would lead to a rise
I'd willingly sweep up the floor!
I can talk without getting tied up
To a client whatever his station
On furniture, books, or on art;
Antique, or the modern creation.
I can write a good "ad."
With it's grammar so bad
I'd would appeal to the Hearst federation!

'Tis said business men in the west,
All like an original stunt
And if that's the case it is plain
You've not far to go on the hunt!
I'll admit that my method is odd,
To be literal, really "unruly,"
But I trust you're agreed
The next man you need,
You'll get on the 'phone to "Yours truly."

P.S.—Please note, I began with "Dear Sir,"
While I finished the ode with "Yours truly,"
With a job they'd be strictly the truth:
Don't make me a liar unduly!

WISHES

I have so little, sweet, that I can offer thee,
Save a devotion reaching on thro' years;
And yet such happiness as may be mine
I'd gladly give, if I could make it thine,
To take instead thy sorrows and thy tears!

I have so much, dear heart, that I would take from thee,
I'd rob thee of the many, many hours
Of sadness that still cling from yesterdays,
The cares and troubles of tomorrow's days;
To give instead a path all strewn with flowers.

MY SUNBEAM

Song

I am lost in the garden of sorrows
I have sought for the path in vain,
Yet I joy'd in the ray of a sunbeam
Piercing the shadows of pain.

But the winter has come to my garden,
The sun's hanging low in the sky,
And my sunbeam rests on the tree-tops,
Passing my misery by.

Like a rift in the clouds of my sadness,
Springs hope in a heart that's benumb,
My sunbeam with tender compassion
May whisper me soft: "I come."

THE STRIKE

Jim Brawney, docker's labourer, was standing in the crowd
(One wretched dupe 'mongst many hundreds more),
While bloated, well-paid orators, cursed all the "idle rich
" Oose iron 'eel is grindin' down the pore."
Jim heard about the wrongs he had; something new to him,
And "Have your rights" and "Brothers, show your
pluck,"
But he hadn't any notion what the trouble was about,
Still, "'E wasn't to be put upon": and struck.

Now Little Jimmy (Brawney's son) "an favourin' 'is dad,"
Had one aversion—that—attending school,
And he pondered over father's words "re masters' despot
sway,"
"What's right for dad is right for me," his rule:
Arithmetic and grammar were abhorrent to his soul,
And "Deeds not words can lift you from the ruck":
So though he started out for school, he strolled "down Stepney
Way,"
He'd broken from the tyrants' bonds: and struck.

When from the school came messages, "Was Jimmy taken
ill?"
A neighbour said "she'd seed 'im with 'er Jack,"
His mother lost her temper and her wrath its climax reached,
As heavy rain brought Jimmy sneaking back.
She seized him by the collar, and she tore him from his coat:
"I'll learn yer more 'an school, yer drowned duck,"
And then he lost his knickers, and across her knee he lay,
As mother picked a slipper up—and struck.

“THE POACHER’S SONG”

I live on the venison I take in my snaring,
Nor care I t’was meant for the board of a king,
I scorn every churl who lacks for a supper,
When stags are in woodland and birds on the wing!

I’ll live like a prince till I’m taken,
E’en though with my life I must pay,
As lief have my neck in the halter
As die of starvation to-day.

When storm is abroad and the elf folk are crying,
When night is the blackest I take of my spoil,
No comrade have I save the knife at my girdle,
No friends save the shadows that aid in my toil.

I’ll live like a prince, etc.

No vassal am I to the lords of the forest,
No homage pay I to their pride and their greed:
I hold ’tis but murder that hangs for the slaying
Of things that are wild and sent for our need!

I’ll live like a prince, etc.

LIFE'S WINTER

When winter comes :

Will you be all alone upon the trail

Of waning life?

So brave, yet all unsuited, and so all too frail

To face the rugged path; the frowning cliffs to scale,

Of sordid strife.

When winter comes :

Will you have strength alone to battle each new day

When none will heed ;

And man all pitiless counts not, nor cares who may

Sink in the trampled mire that marks his savage way,

Of Lust and Greed.

When winter comes :

May I be spared, dear heart, so there be one

At least who's near;

To help you bear the load you struggle with alone,

Then when the dark'ning shadows creep and fades the sun,

Call to me dear !

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